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GHOST RIDERS
HEAVEN'S ON FIRE
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GHOST RIDER

JOHNNY BLAZE AND DANNY KETCH ARE CURSED. BOTH BROTHERS ARE DOOMED TO LIVE LIFE AS GHOST RIDERS, BRUTAL SPIRITS THAT EXIST ONLY TO METE OUT VENGEANCE AGAINST EVILDOERS. AFTER YEARS SPENT BEING A PAWN OF HELL, BLAZE HAS RECENTLY LEARNED THAT THE GHOST RIDER IS ACTUALLY A WEAPON OF HEAVEN, BONDED TO HIM BY THE RENEGADE ANGEL ZADKIEL. AT LONG LAST, BLAZE AND KETCH KNOW EXACTLY WHO'S RESPONSIBLE FOR RUINING THEIR LIVES.

ZADKIEL SUCCEEDED IN TRICKING DANNY INTO GATHERING THE POWER OF ALL THE GHOST RIDERS ON EARTH AND USED THAT POWER TO CONQUER HEAVEN. ZADKIEL IS NOW CLOSE TO WIELDING ULTIMATE POWER OVER ALL CREATION.

SAVE THE ANTICHRIST –

SAVE THE WORLD...

TO FULFILL HIS PLAN, ZADKIEL MUST HUNT DOWN THE ANTI-CHRIST, A YOUNG BOY WHO IS DESTINED TO BRING ABOUT THE BIBLICAL APOCALYPSE. WITH HIM OUT OF THE WAY, ZADKIEL CAN COMPOSE THE END OF THE WORLD AS HE SEES FIT.

JOHNNY, HIS CARETAKER SARA, HELLSTORM THE SON OF SATAN AND JAINE CUTTER, OCCULT TERRORIST ARE ON A CRASH COURSE TO GET TO THE KID FIRST.

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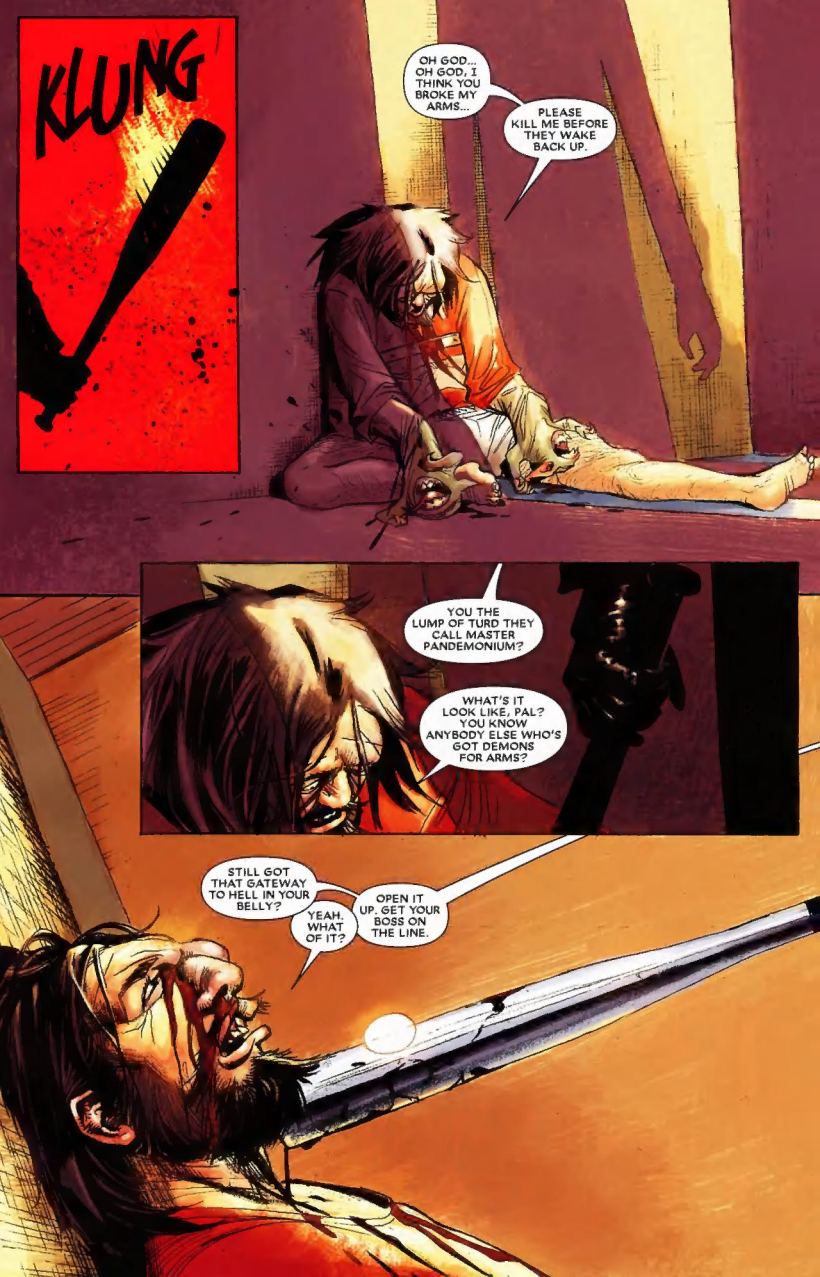
THREE DAYS AGO...
NO! STOP IT, WAIT!
MOTEL
SHUT YOUR STUPID FACE!
PLEASE, ALL I WANTED WAS SOMETHING TO EAT. I'M SO HUNGRY...
YOU WANT SOMETHING TO EAT?
HERE YOU GO!
SPLORT
PLEASE... JUST DON'T...

JUST PLEASE DON'T HIT ME ANYMORE.
ARE YOU CRYING? OH, LOOK AT THIS, THE GREAT MASTER PANDEMONIUM IS CRYING!
HEY GUYS, COME CHECK IT OUT!
WARRRGGHH!
HA, LOOK, HE'S CRYING AGAIN! THE GREAT MASTER PANDEMONIUM, BLUBBERING LIKE A BABY!
MASTER PANDEMONIUM, WHAT A LAUGH! MOTHER OF ALL LOSERS IS MORE LIKE IT.
AHAHAA
HAA!!!
PLEASE JUST LET ME DIE.

KNOCK KNOCK
WHO IS IT?
OPEN UP.
GO AWAY. I'M PAID UP 'TIL NEXT WEEK.
CRASH
OH #$%&!
KRACK


KLUNG
OH GOD... OH GOD, I THINK YOU BROKE MY ARMS...
PLEASE KILL ME BEFORE THEY WAKE BACK UP.
YOU THE LUMP OF TURD THEY CALL MASTER PANDEMONIUM?
WHAT'S IT LOOK LIKE, PAL? YOU KNOW ANYBODY ELSE WHO'S GOT DEMONS FOR ARMS?
STILL GOT THAT GATEWAY TO HELL IN YOUR BELLY?
YEAH. WHAT OF IT?
OPEN IT UP. GET YOUR BOSS ON THE LINE.

HEAVEN'S ON FIRE

PART TWO

ARE YOU THERE, DEVIL? IT'S ME, DANNY.

JASON AARON	ROLAND BOSCHI	DAN BROWN	VC'S JOE CARAMAGNA	PHIL JIMENEZ	SEBASTIAN GIRNER	AXEL ALONSO	JOE QUESADA	DAN BUCKLEY	ALAN FINE
WRITER	ARTIST	COLORS	LETTERER	COVER	EDITOR	CONSULTING EDITOR	EDITOR IN CHIEF	PUBLISHER	EXEC. PRODUCER

NOW.
UH, JAINE...
I THOUGHT YOU WERE HERE TO SAVE ME, JAINE. YOU'RE NOT DOING A VERY GOOD JOB OF IT.
Kgsssssss
GUESS I GOTTA DO THIS MYSELF.
Sssssssss
OWW!
THAT STUPID GUN JUST *BIT* ME.
YOU'RE A DEMONIC LITTLE BASTARD, KID. THE GUN CAN SENSE THAT.

AS CAN I.
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?
YOU MIGHT SAY I'M YOUR STEP-BROTHER.
YEAH? WELL, THEN GET US THE HELL OUTTA HERE, BRO.
THESE PEOPLE ARE ALL SERVANTS OF ZADKIEL. THEY'RE GONNA *KILL* ME.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THEM. THEY'RE NOT GOING TO KILL YOU.

I AM.

TELL MY FATHER I SEND MY REGARDS.
YOU CAN TELL HIM YOURSELF IF YOU DON'T DROP THE PIGSTICKER.
JAINE.
HELLO, DAIMON.
YOU WOULD REALLY KILL ME, YOUR FORMER LOVER, IN DEFENSE OF THIS CHILD WHO WAS BRED BY SATANISTS TO BRING ABOUT ARMAGEDDON?
WHAT CAN I SAY? YOU'RE A BAD BREAKER-UPPER.
AND NOBODY KILLS THE KID. IT WOULD THROW EVERYTHING INTO CHAOS, YOU KNOW THAT.
I THOUGHT YOU LIKED CHAOS.
AND I THOUGHT YOU LIKED WEARING A MASK AND PLAYING SUPER HERO. WHY DON'T YOU PISS OFF AFTER SOME PURSE SNATCHERS AND LET ME HANDLE THIS MESS?
UH, GUYS...
JAINE, PUT DOWN THE GUN AND LET'S--
WHACK

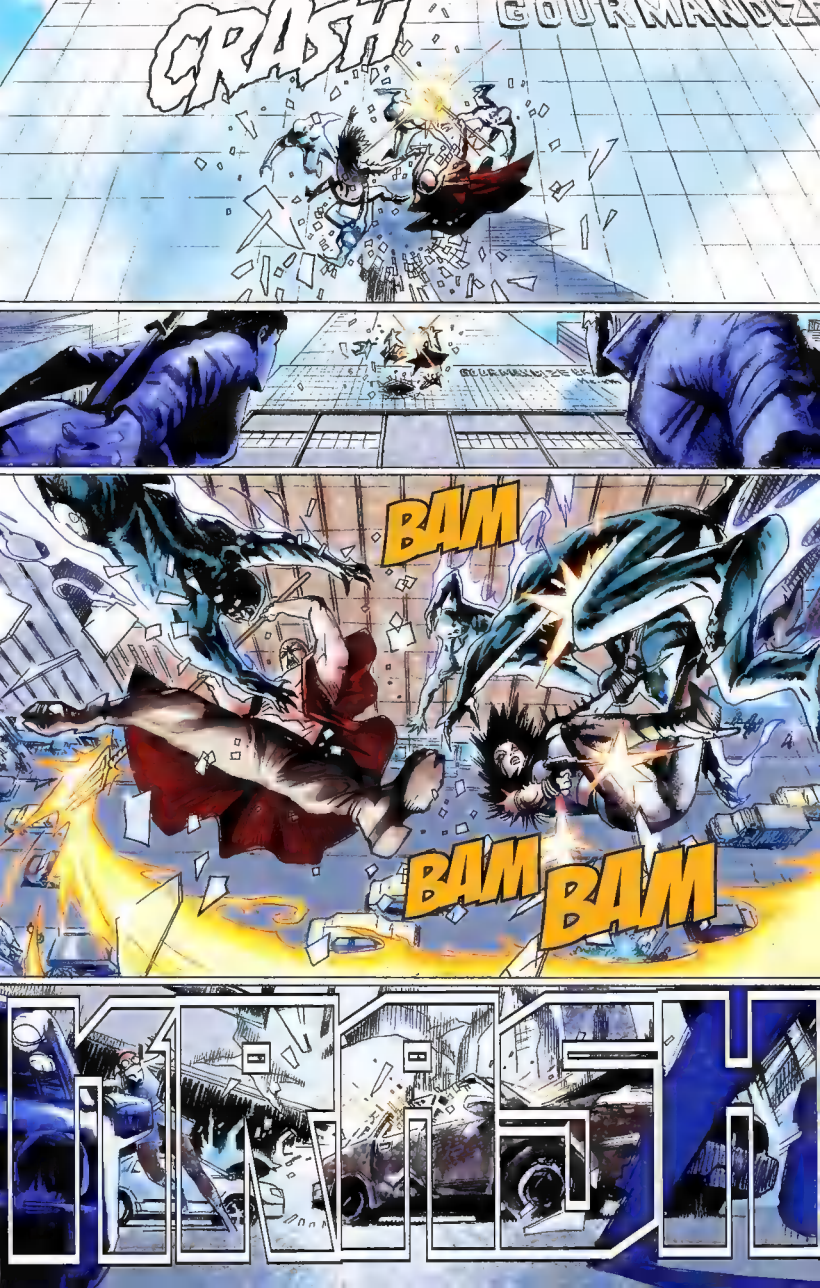
HANDS OFF THE ANTI-CHRIST, BOYS.
YOU CAN'T JUST KILL THEM, JAINE. UNLIKE THAT BOY YOU'RE PROTECTING, THESE PEOPLE ARE INNOCENT. THEY'RE MERELY POSSESSED.
WELL, I HOPE THEY GOT GOOD WORKERS COMP.
BAM BAM
RRAAARRGGGHH!
SPACK
SPLORT
EEEEEE!
SIT THIS ONE OUT, WHY DON'T YA, KID. WOULDN'T WANT THE PRINCE OF DARKNESS GETTING HIS TEENY-LITTLE HANDS DIRTY OR NOTHING.

DAIMON, HEADS UP...
KRAK
THAT'S FOR NEVER CALLING.
YOU DERANGED HARPY! YOU WALKED OUT ON ME!
YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO CHASE ME.
BAM
AND I ONLY LEFT 'CAUSE I WAS SICK OF FEELING LIKE ONE OF SOLOMON'S CONCUBINES. I SWEAR, YOU SATANISTS AND YOUR ORGIES.

RRAUUPRRGH!
CALL ME A SATANIST AGAIN, WOMAN, AND I'LL MELT THE FLESH OFF YOUR BONES!
YEAH, 'CAUSE THAT DOESN'T SOUND ANYTHING AT ALL LIKE SOMETHING YOUR DAD WOULD SAY, DOES IT?
LOVE THE NEW LOOK, BY THE WAY. YOU'RE LOOKING MORE AND MORE LIKE YOUR OLD MAN EVERY DAY.
ENOUGH OF THIS BICKERING, JAINE. THIS ■ NOT THE TIME OR PLACE. LET'S JUST GRAB THE KID AND...
UH...

OOF
GOING SOMEWHERE, KID?
MOVE ASIDE, NIMROD! YOU KNOW NOT WHAT FORCES YOU MEDDLE WITH HERE TODAY!
OH, I DON'T KNOW...
I THINK I GOT A PRETTY GOOD IDEA.

YOU SENSE SOMETHING?
HE'S CLOSE. THE GHOST RIDER'S TUGGING AT ITS LEASH LIKE A DOG THAT'S GOT THE SCENT.
THIS BUILDING. HE'S IN THERE.
SO WHAT DO WE DO? JUST WALK IN AND SAY, HI, WE'RE HERE LOOKING FOR THE ANTI-CHRIST?
THAT'S USUALLY THE SORT OF THING THAT WORKS FOR ME.
WHAT, WOULD YOU RATHER SIT HERE AND PRAY AND HOPE HE JUST FALLS FROM THE SKY?


CRASH
BAM
BAM BAM
CRASH

UUT
GGRRRRRR
HKKK
AAAAAAHHH!
BLAZE? IS THAT YOU?
JOHNNY BLAZE IS IN THE HI
SPLENDID. IF THE GHOST RIDER IS HERE, THEN WE MUST OFFICIALLY HAVE A SUPERNATURAL CLUSTER@#$% ON OUR HANDS.
YOU DIDN'T HAPPEN TO SEE THE ANTI-CHRIST RUN BY HERE, DID YOU?

UH, HELLO?
AAAAAH!
CLICK
YOU MADE MY GUN JAM. WHAT ARE YOU?
I'M A... A NUN?
FIGURES.
UM...AND WHAT ARE Y--
NOTHING YOU WANT A PART OF, SISTER.
YOU SMELL LIKE...
YOU SMELL LIKE *HELL*.
I'M ARMORED UP. GOT A SECOND SKIN FORGED OF MINERALS FROM THE RIVER STYX. GOT IT OFF ZAHGURIM, SATAN'S ARMORER, AFTER TRADING HIM THE SOULS OF SOME DEAD COPS. IT'S A LONG STORY. WHO THE HELL ARE YOU AGAIN?

SHE'S WITH ME.
JAINE, MEET JOHNNY BLAZE, THE GHOST RIDER.
A SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE, HUH? YOU SHOULD KNOW I'VE KILLED THOSE BEFORE.
WHO IS THIS WOMAN, DAIMON?
NEVERMIND HER. WHO MIGHT THIS FETCHING CREATURE BE?
SARA. SHE'S MY NEW CARETAKER.
UH, JOHNNY, CAN I TALK TO YOU ALONE FOR A SECOND?
CHARMED, MADAM.
OH, FOR %&$# SAKE.
SARA, THIS IS DAIMON HELLSTORM, THE SON OF SATAN.
OH!
YOU'RE PATHETIC.

WE CAN'T WORK WITH THESE PEOPLE, JOHNNY. THIS ISN'T HOW IT'S SUPPOSED TO GO. THE ONLY ONE WE NEED IS DANNY.
MY BROTHER? TRUST ME, SARA, DANNY'S THE ABSOLUTE *LAST* PERSON IN THE WORLD I WANNA SEE RIGHT NOW.
JOHNNY?
LOOKING FOR THIS?
DANNY... YOU SONUVA--
BEFORE YOU EVEN START, JUST LISTEN FOR A SECOND. I KNOW EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENED HAS BEEN MY FAULT. IT'S BECAUSE OF ME THAT ZADKIEL NOW SITS ON THE THRONE OF HEAVEN.
BUT I GOT A PLAN TO TAKE HIM DOWN.

CONSIDERING HOW GREAT YOUR LAST PLAN WENT, I CAN'T WAIT TO HEAR THIS ONE.
IF YOU FOOLS WANT TO STORM THE GATES OF HEAVEN, BE MY GUEST. JUST GIVE ME THE BOY AND I'LL BE ON MY WAY.
NO. THE KID IS THE KEY.
I PROMISED HIS FATHER WE'D KEEP HIM SAFE.
YOU PROMISED... *HIS FATHER?* YOU MEAN *SATAN?*
THE DEVIL WANTS TO SEE ZADKIEL FAIL AS MUCH AS WE DO. HE'S GOING TO HELP US. I MADE HIM A DEAL.
YOU MADE A DEAL? DANNY, DO YOU--
WE GET THE KEYS TO HEAVEN, JOHNNY. AT LONG LAST, WE GET OUR SHOT AT REVENGE AGAINST THE BASTARD WHO RUINED OUR LIVES.
AND ALL IT COST ME WAS MY *SOUL.*

MEANWHILE...
DING DING
WHY ARE WE STOPPING HERE? ARE YOU GUYS HUNGRY? IF WE'RE EATING, ARE WE GETTING IT TO GO OR STAYING IN? I WONDER IF THEY HAVE CHICKEN AND WAFFLES? I HAVEN'T HAD CHICKEN AND WAFFLES IN FOREVER. WHAT ARE YOU GUYS GONNA--
JESUS. DOES HE EVER SHUT UP?
WHOA, WHAT HAPPENED HERE?
HE DID.

I COULD SMELL THEIR SIN. THE STENCH OF IT WAS... OVERWHELMING.
I STARTED KILLING THEM AND I JUST COULDN'T STOP.
NOW THIS ONE I LIKE.
KOWALSKI? I'M PUTTING A GROUP TOGETHER TO TAKE DOWN THE GHOST RIDERS. I WAS WONDERING IF YOU MIGHT WANNA JOIN US?
IF BY "TAKE DOWN," YOU MEAN MAIM AND TORTURE AND DECAPITATE AND DEFECATE ON THEIR BUTCHERED SOULS...
...THEN YOU BET I'LL JOIN YOU.

HEH, WELCOME ABOARD, KOWALSKI...
I THINK YOU'RE GONNA FIT RIGHT IN.
To Be Continued...

GHOST WRITERS

How about that last page line-up, huh? If you can name all of those villains gathered together for our Ghost Rider Assassination League, then step right up and accept your flaming No Prize with pride. If you're left scratching your head, don't worry. All will be revealed soon enough. And how about the long-awaited (by me, at least) return of the great Master Pandemonium, he of the demons for arms? I've been loving this guy ever since his first appearance way back in 1986's WEST COAST AVENGERS #4, so it was with a giddy thrill that I added him to the mix for HEAVEN'S ON FIRE. And who knows, we maybe haven't seen the last of ole demon hands. Now let's hear what Flamehead Nation has to say.

Ghost Guys,

Just wanted to drop a line and say I'm thrilled Ghost Rider is back (again). Mr. Aaron, I have truly enjoyed the Ghost Rider issues you've written and very much appreciate your clear familiarity and appreciation of the Ghost Rider mythos.

I also wanted to say THANK YOU(!!) for bringing back Jaine Cutter. As one of the people who read Hellstorm when it was originally published, I'm glad to see she's back and still toting the Breathing Gun, to boot. Can't wait to see Mr. Boschi's take on her armor.

The only complaint I have is Hellstorm's appearance...he looks too much like a smouldering Vermin. At least give him some hair, he's earned that much.

Other than that, keep up the great work!

Brandon Barrows

I must say, I'm happy to be the guy who shaved Hellstorm's head (and not just because I have the same haircut myself). I always wanted him to look a bit more like Anton LaVey, with the shaved head, goatee look, and I definitely wanted to bring the pentagram birthmark back to prominence. I am a huge fan of Son of Satan's old run in MARVEL SPOTLIGHT, in large part thanks to the genius of the late great Steve Gerber, as well as the HELLSTORM: PRINCE OF LIES series from the 90s, so I wanted a look for Daimon that was somewhere between that original look and the updated version. To me, he now looks like an honest-to-goodness Son of Satan.

And I was also excited to bring back Jaine Cutter, who as you mentioned first appeared in HELLSTORM when it was written by some guy named Warren Ellis (wonder whatever happened to him?). Jaine carries the infamous Breathing Gun, which was supposedly created at the behest of Al Capone in the 1920s. It hisses when danger is near and fires sentient meat bullets that can kill angels and demons. Unfortunately for Capone, the gun was unable to cure Syphilis.

Hi Jason,

Let me just start off by saying I've been reading Ghost Rider for more than 30 years now, and I am pleased the way the story has played out. Yet there were a few things that I did roll my eyes at the whole biker-nuns thing. At least Ghost Rider wasn't fighting a great white shark...again.

I'd like to just have a little rant. What always teed me off about Ghost Rider is that every time he'd make a guest spot in another book all the writers never knew anything about him. It's always "Vengeance" this and "Vengeance" that. They always downplayed his power. Johnny's GR was on the same level as Mephisto and was becoming more powerful. Danny's GR was the angel of death. Now they both seem to be the fists of God, Johnny the right fist and Danny the left. I'd like to see the Ghost Rider kick the snot out of the Marvel U. once and for all, just for fun.

But I digress. I have a few questions I'd hope you can clear up for me.

1. I'd like to know what happened to Noble Kale's spirit once it has left Danny? What Happen?
2. In the World War Hulk crossover Doctor Strange had said that the safety switch is off. To me I took this as the Ghost Rider had taken over and that Johnny was no longer in control, but the next issue later Johnny was back in control. What Happen?
3. Why doesn't the Ghost Rider talk back to Johnny anymore? After #20 of this series it seems that the Ghost Rider is only a tool to be used at Johnny's discretion. What Happen?
4. Is the Ghost Rider ever going to kick the snot out of the Marvel U. once and for all, and just for fun?

Mirko
Toronto, Canada

I too would love to see GR kick the snot out of the entire Marvel U, Mirko, but would you settle for two pissed-off GRs riding their bikes down the golden streets of heaven, taking the fight to a renegade angel who aspires to be as God? If so, stay tuned. In answer to your questions:
1. Unfortunately that story's a little too continuity-heavy for what I've been trying to do on the book, which is make it accessible while at the same time still paying tribute to the past. And honestly, I never really liked having Noble Kale in the equation. It made Danny less of a hero to me and a much less interesting character. If nothing else, I'm happy with the way I've been developing Danny's character. He's much more haunted now and ultimately responsible for all of his own actions. And as a reader, I'm anxious to see how it all works out for him. Hopefully you are too.
2. I think in the World War Hulk crossover, you got just a glimpse of what the Ghost Rider would be like if it wasn't bonded to a human host. It'd be unbridled and insanely powerful and out of control. Thankfully it is still bonded though, and those two forces continue to battle for control.
3. After Johnny first uncovered the truth about his origin, his overwhelming thirst for vengeance was able to exert a bit more control over the Ghost Rider for a while. But as we've seen in recent issues, and as we'll continue to explore in this very series, that dynamic has changed. The Ghost Rider is more of a curse again, for Johnny and Danny both.
4. World War Ghost Rider maybe? You never know.

All right, folks, that's all for this month. Come back next issue for Blaze and Ketch, together again, taking on a couple of the wildest villains they've ever faced. The roads will never be the same again, not after the Brothers Ghost Rider butt heads with the rampaging Big Wheel and the unstoppable Trull the Inhuman, the most powerful sentient steam shovel the world has ever seen. You've been warned.

Jason Aaron
August 2009

"And if there's a Hell below, we're all gonna go."

turn the page for the second part of the exciting first issue of GHOST RIDER!

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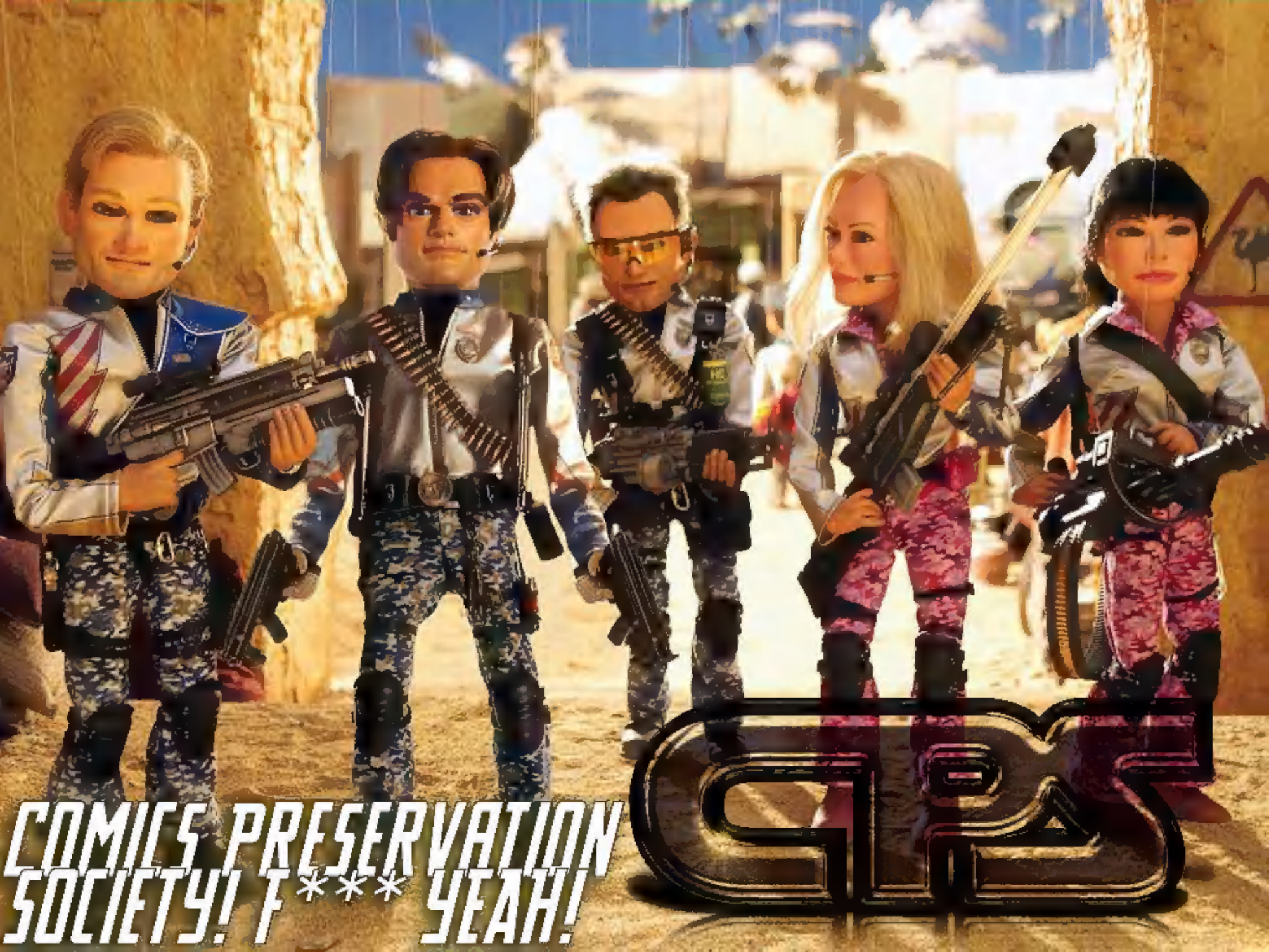
NEXT ISSUE,

Don't Even Think About Missing:

The Wild Ride of TRULL THE INHUMAN!

GHOST RIDERS HEAVEN'S ON FIRE #3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